Chapter Two Short Answer (Answers Below)

1. Discuss the relationship of the political scientist to the practice and process of politics.

2. Explain how the emergence of law illustrates the impersonal nature of the state.

3. Discuss the stages of the research process and the relationships between them.

4. Explain Manzer’s idea of the public good.

5. Explain the different ways that authority is organized in pre-industrial societies.

6. Explain why societies moved from egalitarian, kinship-based modes of organization to inegalitarian forms with centralized authority.

Answers

1. Answers should note that there is a difference between studying politics and doing politics. Understanding politics requires a degree of distance and detachment, while political participation typically requires connection and passion. Intense belief in an aspect of politics can actually interfere with the process of understanding. At the same time, it is important to remember that teaching politics involves efforts to shape broader understandings of both what politics is and what it should be; as such, it cannot avoid being political in some ways. Solutions to this contradiction can be found both in overt acceptance of political interest (i.e., laying one’s cards on the table) and in acknowledging that one’s analysis is a reflection of them, or, alternatively, seeking to engage in impartial analysis, while overtly recognizing that this goal is at best only moderately achievable.
2. Answers should note that law, as an external form of controlling behaviour, moves away from the internalized mode of kinship-based societies. The norm being violated in a legal system resides outside of the individual. The emergence of law indicates that society has become too complex for the mechanisms of community, which in any event have typically been eroded by the impact of hierarchy and stratification. The enforcement of law is also impersonal, insofar as it depends on the claim of authority by the state, which is distinguished from earlier claims by the fact that it does not reside with a specific individual, but rather in the government and in office-holding.
3. Students should be able to identify the following stages: theory (organized statement of existing belief); propositions (conditional statements about the relationship between concepts); hypotheses (concrete, specific predictions of correlations); operationalization (developing a method of measuring correlated factors); research design (selection of a method of operationalization best suited to the hypothesis); observation (implementation of research design); analysis (determining the relationships observable in the data). Ideally, students should demonstrate that the research process is cyclic rather than linear, that is, the results of analysis inform theory.
4. Answers should indicate that Manzer’s ideas are predicated on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. They should indicate an awareness that while public goods are privately determined, they are collectively realized. Ideally, they should indicate that public goods exist in a hierarchy, and that some are more likely/easier to realize than others. Effective answers will draw on broader themes of the relationship between the individual and the collective, notably, claims to authority and legitimacy in the state.
5. Answers should be based on figure 2.2. Students should distinguish between decentralized and egalitarian forms of distributing authority (bands as small, regional manifestations; tribes as groups of bands connected by shared language, culture, and other unifying factors); and centralized and hierarchical forms (chiefdoms as ranked societies; states as centralized, coercing authorities). More developed answers may point to the egalitarian, consensus-driven nature of pre-state forms, and compare the role played by consensus to that of public opinion and norms in civil society.
6. Answers should indicate that the emergence of state-based forms of organization are understood as a response to changes in society—that is, that society became unequal, and new forms of authority formed in response. Specific factors include increasing population density, social stratification, new technologies of production, social and economic specialization, and economics based on centralized redistribution. More advanced answers may indicate that although centralized authority and redistribution are factors common to both chiefdoms and states, the authority and power of a chief is interdependent with the redistributive power. It is the personal authority of chiefs that allows them to claim redistributive rights, but that personal authority is dependent on their ability to garner support through redistribution. In the state, both the process of redistribution and authority are impersonal and do not reside in any specific individual. Moreover, the impersonal power of the state extends to coercion; chiefs earn loyalty through the distribution of gifts, and they can punish by withholding them, but states may legitimately apply direct coercion.